

[PRICE \$2½ PER MONTH]

100

LIMITED.
WANTED—A SECRETARY for the
 above COMPANY. Applications to be
 made by letter to the Undersigned.
F. H. O. WILSON,
 Secretary pro. tem.
 Hongkong, 12th September, 1885. [166]

NOTICE.

A. S. WATSON AND CO.
FAMILY AND DISPENSING
CHEMISTS.

By Appointment to His Excellency the Governor and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh,
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DRUGGISTS,
PREPARED.

PATENT MEDICINE VENDORS,
DRUGGISTS, SURGEONS,
AND
ERATED WATER MAKERS.

SHIPS' MEDICINE CHESTS REFITTED,
PASSENGER SHIPS SUPPLIED.

NOTICE.—To avoid delay in the execution of Orders it is particularly requested that all business communications be addressed to the Firm, A. S. Watson and Co., or HONGKONG DISPENSARY.

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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications on Editorial matters should be addressed "The Editor," and those on business "The Manager," and not to individuals by name. Correspondents are requested to forward their names and address with communications addressed to the Editor, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

All letters for publication should be written on one side of the paper.

Advertisements and subscriptions which are not ordered for a fixed period will be continued until terminated.

Orders for extra copies of the Daily Press should be sent before 11 a.m. on the day of publication. After that hour the supply is limited.

DEATH.

On the 13th instant, at Chiofo, G. F. MacLagan.

1197

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, SEPTEMBER 15th, 1885.

The new Opium Convention seems to have been agreed to by the British Government with considerable misgivings as to the ability of the Imperial Chinese Government to carry out its part of the arrangement.

Earl GRANVILLE, in the early part of the correspondence, says to Marquis Tseho: "The working of the transit pass system already in force in regard to goods other than opium has not been so satisfactory as to enable Her Majesty's Government to feel confident that it will be an effectual safeguard in the case of opium, and it would be indispensable, in order to prevent future misunderstanding and difficulty, that before the system is extended, the details of carrying it into effect should be arranged."

Marquis Tseho replies that the Imperial Government will be prepared to "give all reasonable guarantees for the transit certificates really conferring on the goods the promised exemption, but they believe that the strongest guarantee will consist in the moral obligation imposed on them by the consideration that the arrangements have been of the Chinese Government's own proposing."

It was on this assurance, Earl GRANVILLE in a subsequent despatch declares, that Her Majesty's Government were induced to consent to the arrangement, but, as Lord Salisbury says: "Her Majesty's Government would desire that the agreement should contain a clause giving them the right to terminate the arrangement at any time if the internal administration on opium is not effectively abolished."

This is asserted by the Marquis Tseho. As if to emphasize the doubts entertained as to the probability of the arrangement being faithfully and effectively carried out, when the negotiations are approaching completion Mr. O'Connor, forwards from Peking an abstract of a memorial which appeared in the Peking Gazette containing grave charges against the Customs Administration in the Province of Anhui.

The memorial Mr. O'Connor says "is important as affording another proof of the inefficient control of the Central Authority over the Executive Provincial Administration."

The memorial referred to discloses the old tale of illegal exactions and official peculations. The Marquis de Salisbury, who had at that time taken charge of the Foreign Office, brings it to the notice of the Marquis Tseho, pointing out that if such exactions were allowed to continue they would be fatal to the due performance of the engagements assumed by China under the agreement about to be signed; asking for some assurance as to the steps which would be taken, in addition to the issue of a special Imperial Decree and the grant of transit certificates, in order to enforce the observance by the provincial authorities of the terms of the agreement; and reminding the Marquis that it would be imperative on Her Majesty's Government to exercise the power reserved to them of terminating the agreement in case the Chinese Government should be unable to secure opium protected by transit pass from further taxation while on its way to the place of consumption.

The Marquis Tseho replies that the Anhui case is "one of those individual cases of malversation which the Governments of all countries have occasionally to regret," and that the way in which the irregularities had been denounced and the measures which he (the Marquis) had learned had been promulgated and spontaneously taken by the Imperial Government to have the matter investigated, showed how desirous the Government was to punish such abuses. These are brave words, but, unfortunately, the case referred to, so far from being, as such cases are supposed to be in civilized countries, exceptional, is typical of the state of affairs prevailing all over the country, and which is fostered by the system of farming out the revenue.

Serious obstacles to the successful working of the new system will be encountered, but we believe the Chinese Government will nevertheless make every effort to fulfill the engagement into which they have entered, as it is evidently the first step in a far-reaching policy they wish to pursue. The official correspondence received by the last mail enables us to perceive the wishes and aspirations of the Chinese in this matter more clearly than did the fragmentary information given by the home newspapers. The policy the Chinese wish to pursue is evidently in the direction of the further centralization of the revenues and the government of the Empire. The abolition of the *lekin* barriers is in contemplation, and opium has been so

lotted as an article on which to experiment as to the working of the system it is desired to substitute for that of the barriers. On the success or non-success of this experiment will depend for the time being the fate of this policy of centralizing the fiscal arrangements which are now separately controlled by the various provincial Governments. The British proposal was that the Opium Article of the Chinese Convention should be put in force, on condition that the amount of *lekin* to be collected by the Customs should be calculated on the basis of the amount levied in 1878, and that the area within which opium should be free from further taxation should be defined; the Chinese was at liberty beyond that area to levy any *lekin* they pleased. The Chinese, however, negotiated with great persistency in favor of their own proposal, that a uniform rate of *lekin* should be collected at all the ports, which should frank the opium to the place of consumption. Finally the British Government assented to this, reserving to themselves the right to terminate the agreement at any time should the transit certificate be found not to confer the complete exemption from taxation stipulated for. The working of the new arrangement will be watched with keen interest, for there can be no reasonable doubt that if it proves successful it will ultimately be applied to other goods, and we will arrive at what the Marquis Tseho calls "that freedom of circulation which has always been maintained would be so advantageous to the development of the inland trade of China, native as well as foreign." For the present, however, it must be regarded simply as an experiment, and we are not disposed to speculate with any amount of confidence on the result. As regards the collection of *lekin* by the Foreign Customs on the whole import and export trade, on a recent occasion expressed our belief that such a system under present conditions would be quite impracticable, except at an enormous cost to the foreign trade. The new arrangement with regard to opium will prove whether the conditions can be so far altered, whether the Peking Government can exercise such effective control over the provincial authorities, that the Treaty powers might safely consent to the collection of *lekin* by the Foreign Customs in the full assurance that no further exactions or contributions would be levied on the goods while in transit.

The correspondence shows that the negotiations have been conducted on the Chinese side with great ability. Not only did the Chinese gain their end so far as the system of collection is concerned, but as to the amount of the *lekin* they also carried their point. They wanted Tls. 80 as *lekin* in addition to the Tls. 30 import duty, while the British Government for a time wished the *lekin* rate fixed at Tls. 70, but in the end the latter gave way on this point, and the Chinese got all they asked for. Nor does the Tls. 110 free the opium right to the hands of the consumer; it frees it only to the retail market, where it becomes subject to the same taxation as native opium. This mention of native opium in the Convention outside the ground from under the feet of the anti-opium agitators, as showing that so far from opium being forced on the Chinese the cultivation of the drug in China itself is openly recognized by the Government and is made to contribute to the revenue. The Chinese do not seem to have imported any sixty-six tons into the discussion. In the Convention the expression occurs, "The Governments of Great Britain and of China," recognizing the desirability of placing restrictions on the consumption of opium; but there is nothing in the correspondence to show how this came to be inserted, the only passage having any direct bearing on it being the following, which occurs in one of the Marquis Tseho's despatches:—"It can scarcely be contended that, considering the exceptional nature of opium traffic, and the duties which in other countries are frequently levied on articles on the consumption of which it is much less incumbent on a Government to keep a check, than 25 per cent, or the rate which the import and *lekin* duties now asked, for the amount to be levied, would be otherwise than extremely moderate." The sole object of the Chinese in short seems to have been the very sensible one of getting as much revenue as they could, and to have that revenue collected in the way they thought best in their own interests. In commenting the proposals to Lord GRANVILLE, the Chinese Minister wrote:—"In its external relations, the Chinese Government has never had an opportunity of carrying out a scheme which, like the present one, it believed could be made to harmonize with existing institutions, and should this one be adopted in the form in which it is proposed, it will be the foundation of the Imperial Government to execute it in such a manner as to show that a fair agreement drawn up in conformity with the existing conditions of the country, may really be more advantageous to foreign trade than one which, whilst promising more, has been drawn up either in ignorance or in defiance of them." The Chinese Government has now got its opportunity; it remains to be seen what it will make of it. If it fulfills its professions a new era in the conditions of foreign trade in China will have been commenced.

Today, the 15th September, is the *Pearse* New Year's Day, 1555 of King Yenshi.

The Austrian gunboat *Nastika*, Commander Spetzer, arrived here yesterday morning from Kobe.

Owing to the rain yesterday afternoon, the Garrison Assault Arms had to be postponed to the first day, probably to-day.

The two direct steamers, with the ninth sale of opium and the tenth Indian mail, left Calcutta on Wednesday, the 14th inst., for Hongkong.

In a paper on England's yarn trade with the world, in the *Manchester Examiner*, we find this—Our yarn trade with China is falling off—1880, 194 millions; 1884, 162 millions; Hongkong not included above, 1880, 164 millions; 1884, 123 millions. Japan is a good customer of ours, though the yarn trade has declined here as well as in China—1880, 27 millions; 1884, 22 millions. The United States of America seems a most unfatigable commercial country. In 1884, while we made America \$21,000,000 sterling for raw cotton, she took from us \$4,000,000 worth of cotton yarn, despite the fact that she can spin them from her own cotton at something like 50 per cent. less in cost of production, taking the American cost of production.

We learn from the local office of the Company that the *P. and O. steamer* *Indra*, with the *Indra* and *Indra*, the *Indra* and *Indra*, for this port at 8 o'clock yesterday morning.

Weather permitting, trials of the "Far-East" Fire-Extinguisher, "Hudson's" will be made this afternoon by the agent, Mr. Graydon, on the Parade Ground at 3.15 p.m., and one on the Chinese Recreation Ground at 7.15 p.m.

A meeting of the Hongkong Choral Society was held at the City Hall yesterday evening, when the members of the Society, who are now in the hands of the "May Queen," by William Stanley Bennett, with miscellaneous selections for the second part. It is hoped the work will be commenced towards the end of October.

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The *Philadelphia Call* falls foul of a young Siamese who has recently written a book record of his adventures in the East. The *Call* objects to Mr. Thakura's description of the Philippines. It says:—"A Siamese youth, Mong Thakura, who has spent several years in these United States of America to get a certain grip of our language and learn to admire our little ways, has just written a book about us. Mr. Thakura, whose heart generally is better than his syntax, makes some remarks on Philadelphia girls which they will be justified in resenting, and which can only be accounted for by the fact of his being used to women whose straight dark locks are plastered to their heads with a liberal quantity of pomade. He is obviously not a little out of his mind in the fore part of the book, and in the rear it takes shape what the natives call a 'Lanangy' knot, and which is ugly." We venture to say that Mr. Thakura will find no greater credit in any part of the world than he finds in Philadelphia, and that if he does not admire them it is because his taste is not educated up to the point of classical beauty. Grecian knots, and the hair of black and white women, are our taste leads us to admire the bias eyes of the Celestials, or the half-open eyes and straight locks of the Siamese."

The following is the result of running for the St. Legar:—
Isobar 1
Isobar 2
Isobar 3

THE DOUGLAS STEAMSHIP COMPANY, LIMITED.

The following is the report for presentation to the shareholders at the second ordinary general meeting to be held at the office of the company on Wednesday, the 23rd September, at 3 p.m.:—

The general managers have now to present to the shareholders the second annual report of the company, which was adopted on the 23rd September, 1884.

The first half of the year under review was a very successful one for the company, and the result of the operations was a profit of £105,715.15.

The second half of the year was also a very successful one, and the result of the operations was a profit of £105,715.15.

The total profit for the year was £211,430.30.

The total dividend for the year was £105,715.15.

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